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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BISHKEK 000091

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [MARR](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: KYRGYZSTAN: AMBASSADOR AND FM DISCUSS ICG VISA
REFUSAL, MANAS TRANIST CENTER, AND "BISHKEK INITIATIVE"

REF: BISHKEK 86

Classified By: Ambassador Tatiana C. Gfoeller, for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: In a cordial meeting, Ambassador Gfoeller and Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Kadyrbek Sarbayev discussed the denial of a visa extension to the International Crisis Group's Central Asia Project Director Paul Quinn-Judge by the MFA. The Ambassador expressed concern at the decision and noted that ICG was a respected international research organization. Sarbayev said that he was unaware of the case, but promised to be helpful on this issue. The Ambassador reviewed the status of the Transit Center agreement commitments, noting the positive progress made over the last six months. Sarbayev expressed satisfaction at the progress, noting that the information was timely since he would soon have to brief Parliament on the Transit Center. Sarbayev talked about the Istanbul and London conferences on Afghanistan, calling both "positive." He highlighted his efforts to garner support for President Bakiyev's "Bishkek Initiative," which he said several countries had expressed interest in. Sarbayev strongly hinted that the Russians had been telling the Kyrgyz at the conferences not to trust the Americans, who would soon "cut and run from Afghanistan as they did from Vietnam." However, he assured the Ambassador that he did not believe this. The Ambassador also raised the Quinn-Judge visa issue with the Head of the Presidential Secretariat, Oksana Malevanaya, who said that the problem had arisen because of Quinn-Judge's use of a shady Chinese company as a visa intermediary. She promised that he would have no difficulties if he applies directly. End Summary.

12. (C) On February 2 Ambassador Gfoeller met with Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Sarbayev to review a variety of bilateral issues, including the Transit Center agreement commitments and the upcoming Annual Bilateral Consultations. A relaxed and friendly Sarbayev officially agreed to hold the ABCs on April 8-9 in Washington, adding that he looked forward to the discussions, including on Human Rights. Sarbayev told the Ambassador that Maxim Bakiyev, head of the Central Agency for Development, Investment and Innovation, would lead a Kyrgyz

government delegation to Brussels for official meetings with the European Union in February. In January, Bakiyev led a government delegation to China (reftel).

ICG Visa Refusal

13. (C) The Ambassador raised the visa case of Paul Quinn-Judge, International Crisis Group's (ICG) Central Asia Project Director based in Bishkek. On January 31, the Kyrgyz Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed Quinn-Judge that his one-year visa extension had been denied based on unspecified information from the National Security Service and that he had to leave Kyrgyzstan by February 8. The Ambassador expressed concern about this decision and emphasized that ICG was a reputable research organization with a high-profile Board of Directors. The Ambassador noted that refusing Quinn-Judge a visa would not help Kyrgyzstan's efforts to promote a positive international image. The Foreign Minister was unaware of the case, but said that he would look into the issue immediately and would help. The Minister's assistants subsequently telephoned the Embassy looking for more details on Quinn-Judge's visa case.

14. (C) In two separate conversations, the Ambassador also discussed the issue with Head of the Presidential Secretariat Oksana Malevanaya. In the first, Malevanaya, a personal acquaintance of Quinn-Judge, said that she liked and respected Quinn-Judge and would do all she could to reverse the decision. In the second, (reported septel) Malevanaya

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reported the results of her inquiries. She said that the National Security Service had quashed Quinn-Judge's visa, not because they have a problem with him, but because they have a problem with the Chinese firm "Antay" that he used to handle his visa application. If Quinn-Judge reapplies for the visa himself, without using Antay, Malevanaya promised, his visa will be approved.

TRANSIT CENTER COMMITMENTS

15. (C) The Ambassador and Foreign Minister also reviewed the status of the commitments outlined in the Transit Center agreement, highlighting the progress on finalizing a joint agreement on the EDF and boosting U.S. assistance and cooperation on counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics. The Ambassador noted that the final terms for establishing joint manning of entry control points at the Transit Center at Manas International Airport were in the final stages of discussion and that an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement would enable the U.S. to provide support for the Kyrgyz Internal Forces that have been selected to provide security at Manas. The Ambassador also updated Sarbayev on the parking ramp project and the air traffic control system. Sarbayev agreed to meet with Brigadier General Joseph Lanni, Commander of the Air Force Security Assistance Center, on February 8 during his visit to Bishkek.

16. (C) Sarbayev thanked the Ambassador for the information on the projects connected to the Transit Center. He noted that much progress has been made on fulfilling the commitments and called the update "useful" as he will soon need to brief Parliament on the status of the Transit Center agreement.

BISHKEK INITIATIVE & AFGHANISTAN CONFERENCES

17. (C) Sarbayev briefed the Ambassador on his participation at the conferences on Afghanistan in Istanbul and London. He said that at both conferences he discussed with many different government representatives, including from the U.S., President Bakiyev's "Bishkek Initiative." Calling the concept "flexible," he provided the Ambassador with the latest version of the "Bishkek Initiative" concept paper. He

called both conferences successful, noting that the Turkey conference was more regionally focused than London. Sarbayev highlighted that the "Bishkek Initiative" was not intended to replace other efforts or conferences on Afghanistan, but rather provide a forum for experts to discuss important international and regional issues.

18. (C) Sarbayev said that many of the elements of the "Bishkek Initiative" had been included in the final Istanbul conference statement. One proposal from the Turkey summit was to create a "Minds Center," which Sarbayev wanted to be based in Bishkek, for experts to come together and discuss key regional issues, including the particular social, political, religious, and ethnic elements of Afghan society. At the London conference, Sarbayev said that Lithuania, the 2012 OSCE Chair, supported the "Bishkek Initiative" and that representatives from the Lithuanian government planned to visit Bishkek to review and discuss ideas for cooperation. He also said that Kazakhstan, the current OSCE Chair, was interested in using some elements of the "Bishkek Initiative."

19. (C) Following the London conference, Sarbayev said that he was pleased to hear that the U.S. would gradually "transfer" control of Afghanistan to the Afghan government rather than completely withdrawing and leaving the country without clear direction. He noted that there were "skeptics" at both conferences - he strongly implied the Russians - who kept warning the Kyrgyz not to trust the Americans on Afghanistan,

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"where soon enough they will cut and run, just like they did in Vietnam." However, he emphasized that he personally did not believe this, but rather felt the Karzai government will be ready and able to take control after a smooth hand-over from the Americans. He called the creation of a "Re-Integration Fund," initially funded with \$500 million, an important moment and felt that discussions with all parties in Afghanistan, including the Taliban, could be fruitful for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Sarbayev said that he looked forward to discussing the "Bishkek Initiative" and other regional and Central Asian issues at the upcoming U.S.-Kyrgyzstan Annual Bilateral ConsultationCKw_)`QETAQf

COMMENT

10. (C) The "Bishkek Initiative" continues to live on despite the numerous other international fora, conferences, and initiatives on Afghanistan. The "Bishkek Initiative" will indeed need to be "flexible" if Sarbayev is going to save this President Bakiyev supported initiative from other countries' poaching of ideas and concepts. Kyrgyzstan is truly interested in earning international respect, especially since it is the only country in Central Asia to host a U.S.-operated military Transit Center. It is noteworthy that in this very cordial meeting Sarbayev did not raise Kyrgyz interests in the Northern Distribution Network (as he usually does) or even hint at the upcoming Transit Center renewal deadline.

GFOELLER

=====CABLE ENDS=====